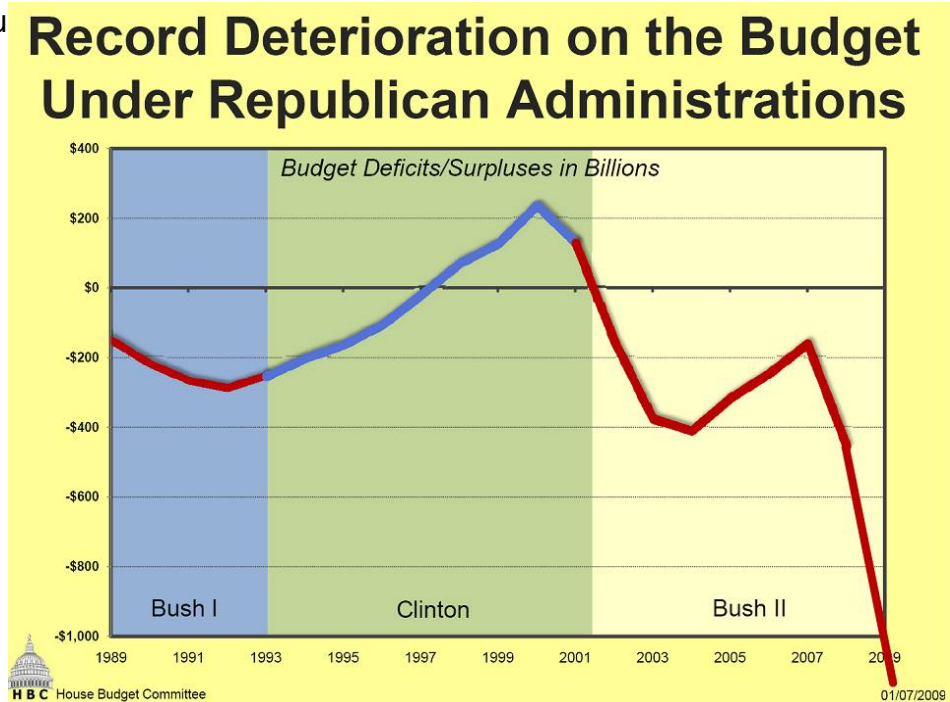


March 24, 2009

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Speaker, this week the House Budget Committee will mark up the concurrent budget resolution for fiscal year 2010. Over a month ago, President Obama submitted a budget plan focusing on economic recovery, strategic investments, and most importantly, fiscal responsibility. At this critical juncture in our history, President Obama's budget addresses the mistakes of the past, makes much-needed investments in the future, and will create a better future for all Americans.

As we debate the merits of this budget resolution, we must not forget that President Obama inherited deep deficits and an economic crisis from the Bush administration. This chart shows the budget deficit over the years of the Clinton administration, and what the Bush administration did to the budget. The Bu



sh administration left behind a \$1.25 trillion deficit, a high unemployment rate, and an economy on the verge of collapse. President Obama came into office merely 2 months ago, but he has already successfully proposed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act which will create or save 3.5 million jobs.

The President's budget continues the path toward economic recovery and fiscal responsibility with many necessary investments in education. The President's budget expands access to college education by making the American Opportunity Tax Credit permanent and indexing Pell

grants to keep pace with inflation and the skyrocketing cost of college education. The President also doubles funding for early Head Start and expands Head Start.

The President's budget calls for improving and expanding access to health insurance and lowering the cost of health care for every American. The President's budget includes several provisions to improve quality and efficiency in the health care system, saving the American people approximately \$300 billion over the next 10 years. The President believes that the only way to rein in the cost of government for the foreseeable future is to address the costs associated with health care, and this budget does that.

The President's budget also ensures that the Nation honors and cares for our veterans when they return home by increasing funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs by \$25 billion over the next 5 years. This increased funding will help the VA reduce their claims backlog and modernize and improve VA hospitals and facilities. These investments in the VA will help address the large influx of new veterans into the VA system from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

So, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the most telling feature of the President's budget is that it is an honest measure of where we are and of where we are going. The Bush administration used phantom budget tactics to keep the costs of many expensive measures out of the budget. Unlike budgets submitted in the past few years, the Obama budget honestly includes the cost of our military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and other items that we know we must pay for and have paid for every year such as the Medicare Doctor's Payment Fix and the Alternative Minimum Tax. President Obama's budget takes the necessary steps to put the budget back on a fiscally sustainable path once the economy recovers. The budget proposes to cut the deficit in half by 2013. Additionally, the President's budget proposes to restore the fiscally responsible pay-as-you-go rules, which were critical in turning the budget around in the 1990s.

Many may claim that the President's budget will cause deficits, but those who advocate the problems with the President's budget fail to remind themselves that the policies that they, in fact, are advocating are the policies that got us in the ditch we are in today. What they forget is that this Nation had to endure 8 years of failed economic policies, which produced one of the worst recessions in 70 years, the worst job growth since the Great Depression, an increase in the number of Americans living in poverty, and an increase in the number of Americans living without health insurance.

Furthermore, the Bush administration degraded the Federal budget's condition from healthy to weak, converting a 10-year \$5.5 trillion surplus to more than a \$3 trillion deficit--a swing of more than \$9 trillion over 8 years and an average of over \$1 trillion a year.

Mr. Speaker, these policies have failed. It is time to turn to the policies that work. The President's budget does just that. As a member of the House Budget Committee, we look forward to Wednesday's markup to ensure that the congressional budget resolution reflects the priorities of the President's budget.